

SENATE—Tuesday, February 13, 2001

The Senate met at 9:32 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, before us is a brand new day filled with opportunities to live out our calling as servant leaders. We trust You to guide us so that all that we do and say today will be for Your glory.

Since we will pass through this day only once, if there is any kindness we can express, any affirmation we can communicate, any help we can give, free us to do it today. Help us to be sensitive to what is happening to people around us. May we take no one for granted, but instead, be communicators of Your love and encouragement.

We express gratitude for all the people who make this Senate function effectively. Especially today, we thank You for the caring, servant leadership exemplified by Loretta Symms who has just retired as Deputy Sergeant at Arms. We praise You for her commitment to excellence, her 22 years service to the Senate, and her friendship to Senators and staff alike. Bless her as she moves on to the next phase of Your strategy for her life.

Now, Lord, You have richly blessed this Senate so that You may bless this Nation through its inspired leadership. In Your Holy Name we pray. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 13, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,
President pro tempore.

Mr. CHAFEE thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. At 12:30, the Senate will recess for the weekly party conferences. When the Senate reconvenes at 2:15 p.m., there will be an additional period for morning business. This afternoon the Senate may begin consideration of any executive or legislative items available for action. Senators will be notified as votes are scheduled for the week.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m.

Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. shall be under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

Mr. NICKLES. I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. CLINTON. I yield myself 15 minutes of the time controlled by the Democrats.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, yesterday I was in Rome and Watertown, NY, to speak with members of the Rotary Clubs and chambers of commerce about the upstate New York economy and how we can work together to promote investment and job creation in these communities. I will carry their concerns about the economy to the Budget Committee on which I am pleased to serve and where we are fashioning the framework for the next Federal budget.

We are hearing about surplus projections and words of caution, about how

much faith to place in them. We are hearing about President Bush's tax cut plans and words of caution from colleagues who voted for big tax cuts in the early 1980s, cuts which helped contribute to the ruinous deficits and high interest rates that hobbles our Nation's capacity to create jobs, invest in people, and pay down our national debt. The budget resolution we create sets the stage for how much we can invest in health care, schools, and the other pressing needs of families throughout our country. Later this week, I will return to the floor to talk about the budget in greater detail.

Today I would like to discuss a topic that transcends party, geography, and ideology. It is an issue that is important to the people in Rome and Watertown, Rochester and Brooklyn, and everywhere I have been in recent weeks. It will be foremost in my mind as the outlines of the 2002 budget take shape; that is, improving access to quality, affordable health care for New Yorkers, for all Americans, and especially for our children.

In this session of Congress, we will need to focus on many aspects of health care, medical privacy, Medicaid funding, genetic discrimination, providing prescription drug coverage for our seniors, and long-term care for our families, among others. Today I will talk about the importance of insuring more Americans, particularly our children, and protecting the rights of those who are insured.

In all corners of New York, I have met countless people who have told me powerful stories of the cruel inequities of our health care system. Last August, at the Dutchess County Fair, a single mother told me how hard it was to keep her family afloat because her medical bills totaled more than \$30,000. She was worried she would become impoverished and forced to go on welfare.

In Massena, an uninsured woman suffering from cancer told me how much trouble she had finding a doctor who would treat her for free. In the MonteFiore Children's Emergency Room in the Bronx, I saw children who had come there for asthma treatments because they had no health coverage and, therefore, no doctor of their own. From Buffalo to Bay Shore, the people of New York have urged me to go to the Senate to fight for better health care.

Many of my colleagues will remember when I came to Capitol Hill 7 years ago with an idea or two about how to improve health care in our country. At that time, I was privileged to work with the Acting President pro